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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/14/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IS](#) [EG](#) [LE](#)
SUBJECT: AMRE MOUSSA TO DAMASCUS; ARAB LEAGUE OFFICIAL
RESPONDS POSITIVELY TO REPORTS OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENT FREEZE

Classified By: MINISTER-COUNSELOR FOR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS
WILLIAM R. STEWART. REASONS: 1.4 (B) and (D)

[¶1.](#) (U) Arab League Cabinet Advisor and Spokesman Alaa Roushdy told us November 14 that Secretary General Amre Moussa's travel to Damascus that evening would focus on the planned Annapolis meeting and Lebanon. Moussa will meet with President Assad, Vice President Shara, and FM Moallam.

[¶2.](#) (C) Roushdy said that the Arab League was planning a ministerial meeting November 22, but that the timing would be contingent on the Annapolis meeting going forward November [¶26.](#) With copies of media reports that Israel planned to announce a settlement freeze on his desk, he told us that in his opinion this development, if true, would go a long way toward securing Arab buy-in for the meeting, especially with the Saudis. On Lebanon, he did not go into detail on Moussa's agenda. He noted that the recent Nasrallah speech (in which he explicitly rejected the "50 plus one" scenario) had caught peoples' attention, and heightened fears of instability if a consensus candidate could not be found.
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